3:Chao E-5 (1939-1941)1948 AF12 North China AF12

of education of village children. The field of village politics in action was taken up by our assistant and another senior student. The work had not been completed when both of them left the university in 1947, but from their record of observation, we began to understand the process of struggle for power among ambitious individuals in the administrative district where our village is located.

One interesting point might be noted in connection with the method of investigation. As social studies are largely a matter of interaction of the observer and the group observed, the individuals whom the observer has most contact with have very much to do with the records of observation of the investigator. The difference between our first contacts with the village in the pre-war days, and later in the post-war days, is that whereas in the former, we had to depend upon our "liaison man", the school principal, in the latter, we are in direct contact with the villagers. After many years of absence, the nature of the first contact is important in the fact that the villagers are conscious that we are their friends, directly intimate and personal and not indirectly through the school principal. We have very little difficulty in approaching any family in the village, and our contact may thus not be unnecessarily conditioned by an intermediary. If contacts have to be conducted with the assistance of a liaison man, friends and enemies of his would be, though unintentionally, also ours, at least we would be so regarded by the villagers. Many sociological and anthropological field workers have not observed this principle and their studies are necessarily biased to that extent.

The most noticeable changes in the village on our first revisit, were the new faces we met on the streets. During the interval of four years, children had grown into young boys and girls. When we went into homes of villagers, we also noted the absence of some of our old acquaintances, as well as the presence of new faces. A couple of aged persons passed away during the war years. Quite a number of girls had grown up and had left to be married. Naturally, about the same number of young married women had come in. These are the natural events in the social metabolism of a community.

After a closer observation, we could hardly avoid the impression of a general economic dilapidation in many village homes. The reduction in the number of ducks and chickens was very noticeable. One of the two duck-raising families was out of business. The family could hardly find sufficient means for the minimum subsistence. But certain families were quite prosperous, and had at least maintained

3:Chao E-5 (1939-1941)1948 AF12 North China AF12

their former condition. The monetary inflation was accelerated in the last years of the war. Those who had little reserve were very hard hit. Some of the clever rich had profited. The short period of price-falling, immediately after the war, had a bad effect on those who had full confidence in the government, when the inflation came back again even at a more rapid rate of acceleration.

Members of the richest family were not in the village. They looked for and lived in cities, as places of security and merriment. Their house and farm were in the hands of two old laborers. These two old laborers of the house became managers of the farm and hired other laborers for the work. The relation of the two laborers to members of the house was one not merely economic in nature, but something personal. The rent of the land was not fixed but varied from year to year at the good will of the managing-laborers. The house was very much dilapidated which was a sign of negligence on the fact of the managing-laborers, and the scant attention paid by the proprietors to their property. The relation of the two groups of laborers was interesting. The manager-laborers had not sufficient time to assume the attitude of a managing-farmer. They commanded the respect of the hired laborers, not so much by their authority, but rather because of their skill in farming.

The major effect of the end of the war was the change in the formal political machinery, and the consequential shift in its personnel. The *pao-chia* system was there when we first revisited the village, but the *fang-li* system and the *Hsin Min Hui* were no longer in existence. The school principal became the deputy head of the *lien-pao* together with new heads of the six old *chia*. Beneath this superficial structure was the struggle for power between two groups. An ambitious duet of father and son wanted to control the *lien-pao*. They organized a group of self-protection militia with the explicit purpose of strengthening the protection of life and property in the local district. They utilized external influence to oust the head, and the deputy head, of the *lien-pao* by accusing them as collaborators of the enemy.

Amidst this struggle for power came a mishap to the deputy head, and his removal from the position of school principal. Whether his removal had anything to do with the political struggle was not known, but following this removal he resigned his office of deputy head. The whole episode was certainly a blow to Mr. H. As we may recall, Mr. H. had the ambition to restore the status